

Agency: Commerce, Community and Economic Development**Grants to Named Recipients (AS 37.05.316)****Grant Recipient: Sunshine Community Health Center****Federal Tax ID: 92-0117838****Project Title:****Project Type: New Construction and Land Acquisition**

Sunshine Community Health Center, Inc. - Construction of New Community Health Clinic

State Funding Requested: \$423,000
One-Time Need

House District: Mat-Su Areawide (13-16)**Brief Project Description:**

Construction of a new 7000-square-foot medical clinic in Willow to replace the current 1400-square-foot double-wide modular facility. The new facility will increase capacity and provide the ability to add new medical, dental, and behavioral health services for an underserved and uninsured population.

Funding Plan:**Total Cost of Project: \$2,812,500**

	<u>Funding Secured</u>		<u>Other Pending Requests</u>		<u>Anticipated Future Need</u>	
	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>FY</i>
Federal Funds	\$235,000	2009	\$500,000	2010	\$447,500	2011
State Funds	\$0					
Denali Commission	\$0		\$300,000	2011		
Rasmuson Foundation	\$0		\$250,000	2011		
Local Funds	\$7,000	2009				
Other Funds	\$500,000	2009	\$150,000	2010		
Total	\$742,000		\$1,200,000		\$447,500	

Explanation of Other Funds:

\$500,000 is a grant from the Mat-Su Health Foundation; \$100,000 is being requested from the Murdock Foundation; and \$50,000 is being requested from the Covidien Matching Challenge Grant (private grant source through the National Association of Community Health Centers).

Detailed Project Description and Justification:

The \$423,000 is to be used for construction of a new 7000-square-foot medical clinic in Willow, AK. Sunshine Community Health Center's 2008-2010 strategic plan calls for "facility expansion," specifically expanding the satellite site, which is approximately 35 miles from the main clinic in Talkeetna. The requested funds will allow SCHC to move into stage three of its building plan: the construction phase. The new proposed facility will allow SCHC to meet the growing health care needs of Willow and surrounding communities.

Since 2008, the clinic population in Willow has grown about 30%, from 1025 unduplicated patients to 1432 in 2009. Due to the lack of space, the clinic is turning away two to three patients daily. There is one other medical clinic in Willow, but they are not taking any additional Medicaid/Medicare patients nor are they taking uninsured patients.

Inefficiencies attributable to an increasingly inadequate and overcrowded facility extend much further than potential services not yet implemented. Physical limitations have reached a critical point where not only are staff additionally stressed by working in crowded conditions, but the ability of SCHC to provide services is beginning to be compromised.

Their current satellite clinic is a 1400-square-foot modular double-wide building with only two useable exam rooms, a small lab that also serves as office space for two nurses, and a front office area shared by the provider, biller, and front desk staff. This current space greatly hampers SCHS's ability to see the number of patients requesting care on a daily basis.

A new larger facility will also allow for an increase in services, and provide the space needed to add an additional provider and support staff. This new facility will also allow for expanded behavioral health services and future dental clinic.

This project has not gone through a formal public review process (it is not required; however, it is part of the Board's strategic plan, one that has received input from communities (Talkeetna and Willow, patienta and staff.

Project Timeline:

Land was purchased in 2008 and SCHC entered into a contract with USKH in 2009 to begin conceptual designs. In June of 2009, SCHC entered into a contract with John Conway, of Conway Management Group, to serve as Project Manager. The original completion date was summer of 2010, but due to weather site development has been delayed and the new target completion date is 2011.

Entity Responsible for the Ongoing Operation and Maintenance of this Project:

Sunshine Community Health Center

Grant Recipient Contact Information:

Name: Sharon Montagnino
Address: HC 89 Box 8190
Talkeetna, AK 99676
Phone Number: (907)733-2273
Email: smontagnino@sunshineclinic.org

Has this project been through a public review process at the local level and is it a community priority? ☐ Yes ☒ No

SCHC Need for new Willow medical facility

Existing deficiencies

The purpose of this request is to help fund the Willow Expansion building project, which will not only enhance the working conditions for our current medical staff but also increase our ability to see more patients and eliminate long waits for medical and behavioral health visits. Sunshine Community Health Center purchased 14 acres of land in 2008, in 2009 began the process of securing funds, and hired an architectural firm to provide a conceptual design. Our current facility is overcrowded with insufficient space for meeting the increased medical needs. Our targeted service area is Willow, Houston, Skwentna, and few other smaller remote communities. Most of the residents are unemployed and/or self-employed and many are seasonal workers. The identified service area has no major industry with a high unemployment rate. The population in this targeted area is largely poor and over 50% are without health insurance, many living remotely without electrical service to their homes. Nineteen percent live in poverty according to the 2000 Census however; our data indicates that the poverty level may be growing. Currently 36% are below 100% of poverty and 53% have no insurance.

a- Barriers to care include lack of adequate transportation and the ability to receive all services in one location. We have been receiving many more referrals from the Wasilla/Palmer area (25 miles south) because many private clinics are limiting the uninsured populations. Fifteen percent (15%) of the current service population is diabetic, while another 15% suffer from hypertension. Smoking, drinking, and substance abuse are major areas of concern for this population. There is one other private practice provider in the Willow area but the practice is not taking any new Medicaid/Medicare patients nor are they seeing those who lack insurance.

b- The current facility is a 1400 sq ft doublewide modular unit, which was used in Talkeetna from 1987 until 2004, then moved to Willow when a new facility was built in Talkeetna. This 1400 sq ft building has only two useable exam rooms, which austere not only limits the number of patients that can be seen in a day but also limits our ability to increase providers to meet the growing need. Because this facility lacks extra space to conduct behavioral health sessions, an exam room is utilized once a week for four hours, which then severely limits the medical visits for that day. The facility has a small lab, which also serves as the nurses' clinical space, a dispensary area, which is part of the staff lunchroom, and front office space, which is shared by the provider, registration, and patient services clerk. Other than the exam rooms there is no space for staff (billing or patient services staff) to meet privately with patients, which is cause for concern under HIPAA guidelines? Exams rooms also lack adequate sound attenuation.

c- In the current facility there is only one rest room – shared by staff and patients. The building lacks an emergency egress and while is not up to ADA standards the facility is wheelchair accessible in the front, it is not optimal and can be somewhat dangerous. The building is not energy efficient, lacking in good insulation against the very cold Alaskan winters when temperatures can dip to -40+ for days at a time. The facility also lacks a stand-by electrical power generator to handle the frequent power outages and lacks a back up or redundant heating system which means if the current system goes down the facility is shut down.

d- The lack of exam room space is critical to good patient care and outcomes. With only two useable exams rooms and one provider, this frequently means that follow-up visits are rescheduled in order to accommodate medical emergencies. An example of this is how a recent medical emergency tied up an exam room for two hours. A patient comes in severely dehydrated, providers start an IV, after which the provider determines that this patient needs care beyond what the clinic can provide and recommends he be transported to the hospital (35 miles south). Tying up an exam room for 2 hours means that current patient visits are back up and often times rescheduled. Inadequate space is taking its toll on both patients and services.

e- The current facility lacks x-ray equipment, so when a patient comes in with a potential broken bone he/she may be told they have to travel 35 miles to the closest facility for an x-ray, this does not produce good quality of care, nor it is efficient in providing a good medical home for patients. Our providers, patients, and medical staff need space to consult with one another and to be able to provide some patient education on such areas as diabetes, hypertension, and prevention. In Talkeetna, we currently hold specialty clinics (eye/hearing/podiatry/massage therapy/physical therapy/etc.) due to the lack of space SCHC- Willow patients either miss out or have to travel 35 miles for a 30-45 minute clinic visit.

f- Many of the patients at the Willow clinic are in need of counseling services (25% of the current patient base) especially for substance abuse, only being able to provide behavioral health services once a week for four hours greatly hampers our effectiveness in producing good patient outcomes. There is great need for substance abuse counseling in the Mat-Su Borough, and in particular for suboxone treatment. The use of heroine is on the rise in the Willow area and while the Talkeetna Clinic (35 miles north) is currently holding two suboxone clinics it would be advantageous to have one in the Willow area. The integration of behavioral health and primary health care is critical to providing a good medical home, especially for our underserved and uninsured patients.

Proposed Improvements

- a- The new proposed building will be a \$2.8 million **7000 sq ft building, adding 5600 sq ft** of additional space for more rooms, added services, and better flow.
- b- The new building will have six exam rooms and one procedure room for urgent care/ after hour's calls. This increase in exam rooms allows us to hire a second provider for the Willow Clinic **increasing our daily capacity by 50%**. Increased exam room space will also allow for the offering, at a minimum, **six yearly specialty clinics** (vision/hearing/foot/physical therapy) for patients. **Specialty clinics will provide care to an additional 120 patients.**
- c- Our lab space will increase from a 9x9 room shared by two nurses to a 16x14 dedicated lab room. We will have the capacity to **conduct more in-house labs.**
- d- Our providers will have dedicated private office space; currently the provider's office space is part of the front desk/registration area providing very little privacy.
- e- The new facility will provide a Behavioral Health suite (office space and consult room) which allows us to hire a second BH Specialist and **increase our BH service hours by 300%. Conduct suboxone group sessions to an additional 14 patients.**
- f- The new facility will have a 16 x 11 dedicated provider dispensary complete with combination locking door and dispensing window. We will now have enough pharmacy storage space so our Willow meds can be shipped to and stored at the site. This eliminates a bi-weekly transfer of medications from Talkeetna to Willow and **ensures that patients will be able to receive meds the same day as their appointment.**

- g- A digital x-ray room will allow the clinic to **perform necessary x-ray services onsite** eliminating the need for patients to drive 35 miles to the nearest hospital. There are no other x-ray services in the Willow area.
- h- Conference/training room space will be added in order to offer **educational workshops for patients** with diabetes, sessions on healthy eating, dealing with obesity, exercise programs, and provide the **ability for staff to participate in in-house or online training sessions.**
- i- **Providing Jobs- Staffing changes**
 - i. **Move from 1 FTE to 2 FTE providers**
 - ii. **Add .8 BH Specialist**
 - iii. **Add .7 Pharmacy Tech**
 - iv. **Add .5 Maintenance staff**
 - v. **Add .5 Patient Service staff**
 - vi. **Retain 1.5 Patient Services staff, 2 FTE medical support, .4 cleaning/maintenance**

Project Status

Two 7 acres lots were purchased in November 2008 for the future home of the Willow Clinic and at that time the Board established a Willow Expansion Committee comprised of Board members and staff. In early 2009, the committee began meeting to sketch out a rough design of the clinic needs. In June of 2009, Sunshine Community Health Center (SCHC) entered into a contract with USKH to provide conceptual designs of a new medical clinic and hired John Conway of Conway Management Group to serve as Project Manager.

In December of 2009 a kick off meeting was held with the following present: USKH for Architectural, Mechanical, Electrical; Enterprise Engineering for Civil, Survey, and Schneider & Associates for Structural, also present was Sharon Montagnino, SCHC Executive Director and John Conway, Project Manager. Ninety percent of the schematic drawings will be done in March and 100% completed by April.

Timeline:

Design-

- 65% by February 26, 2010
- 100% mid April 2010

Construction

- Soil Investigation - Civil Engineers 1/28/2010
- Percolation Test – 1/28/2010
- Site Clearing - 2/2010
- Site development – starts 4/2010
 - Well/septic installation
 - Site grading & building pad preparation
 - Parking lot development
- Bids for General Contractor- May 2010
- Target completion- late summer/early fall 2011

State of Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

Sean Parnell, GOVERNOR

DEPT. OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION of PUBLIC HEALTH SECTION OF NURSING

*Mat-Su Public Health Center
3223 E Palmer-Wasilla Hwy, Suite 3
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
Phone: (907) 356-6600
Fax: (907) 376-3096*

January 25, 2010

Sunshine Community Health Center
HC 89 Box 8910
Talkeetna, Alaska 99676

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support for grant funding of the Sunshine Community Health Center for the Willow Satellite for the following reasons:

- Population demographic changes projected. The Mat-Su Borough projects a 21% increase in children less than 4 years of age (by 2030). The 65 year old population is projected to increase from the current 7% of the population to 16% by 2030. These two populations consume medical services in prevention and maintenance care. An overall population increase is projected from 70,000+ to 176,000 by 2030 in the Mat-Su Borough.
- According to statistics from the Department of Labor, only 2 of the top 50 employers in this region are located in the Willow/Talkeetna area. Most jobs are seasonal without year round health benefits leaving the population unemployed and without insurance the majority of the year.
- In this region 47% of the population is female. The average female's wage is only 56.3% of men wages. For female head of households, there is neither money nor insurance coverage to ensure services for children.
- National unemployment average is 5.4%; State of Alaska state wide unemployment is 7.4% but unemployment in the Mat-Su Borough is 8.5%.
- Cost of living outside of urban areas. The increase cost of fuel is past on to all goods transported into remote communities which means less disposable income to buy insurance for family coverage if not supplied by employer. This can only become grimmer as gasoline prices continue to climb.
- Seasonal transient population. Tourism continues to grow in Alaska but it has positive and negative aspects. More summer job opportunities but many of the tourists are older and require support in remote locations. Foreign and transient visitor frequently depend on insurances that do not completely cover the increase cost of providing services in no way of recouping those monies. The local employers hire seasonal employees that do not have health coverage that also require expansion of services over the summer.

The Sunshine Community Medical Clinic/Willow Satellite fulfills its commitment to the region providing affordable excellent medical care to people in this remote but beautiful area. Employment opportunities are limited and commuting great distances is not possible. Some employers provide insurance but the overall trend is that employers are dropping

insurance as too expensive to provide and passing that responsibility and expense to the employee. The economic picture is grim for remote communities. The loss of this clinic would be devastating to people that would need to commute to Wasilla for care, pharmaceuticals and ongoing medical maintenance.

If I can provide any additional information to strengthen this grant, I would be pleased to provide documentation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jane Conard".

Jane Conard
Nurse Manager
Mat-Su Public Health Center
3223 E. Palmer-Wasilla Hwy
Wasilla, AK. 99654

6/29/09

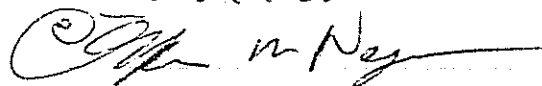
To whom it may concern,

My name is Christopher Negas
and I am writing this letter to
show my support and my thanks to
the Willow Clinic.

Willow Clinic is the Primary
Healthcare Provider for my four daughters,
my wife and myself. The staff
is very professional as well as extremely
friendly.

I believe expansion of the facility
would greatly benefit the community.
It is wonderful to have this level of
Health care so close.

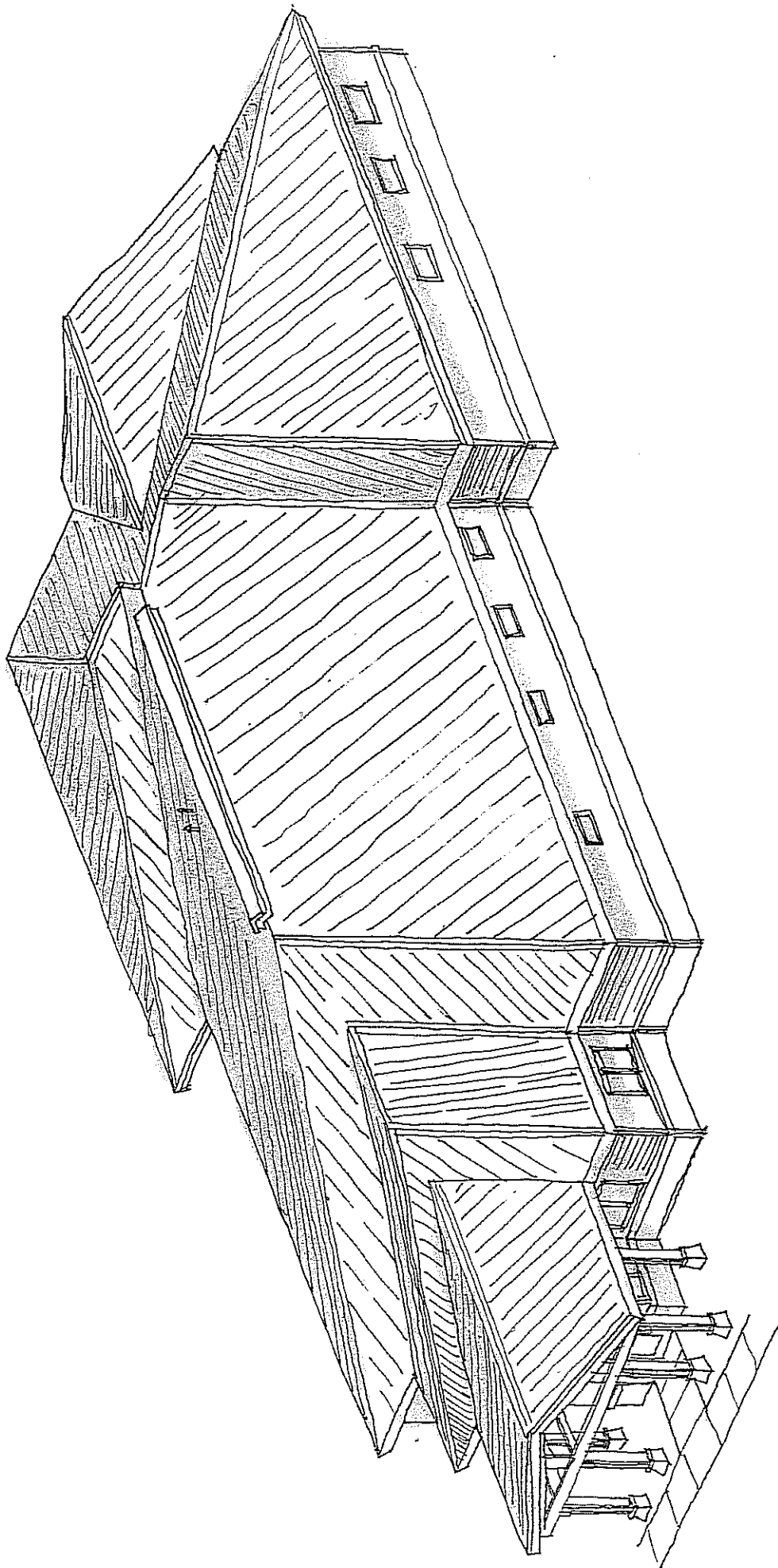
Thank You.

 Christopher Negas

June 25, 2007

I have been going to the Wallon
Clinic since they opened here. The
doctors and staff are exceptional and
are needed badly. I don't know
where I would go to get better care
so close to home.

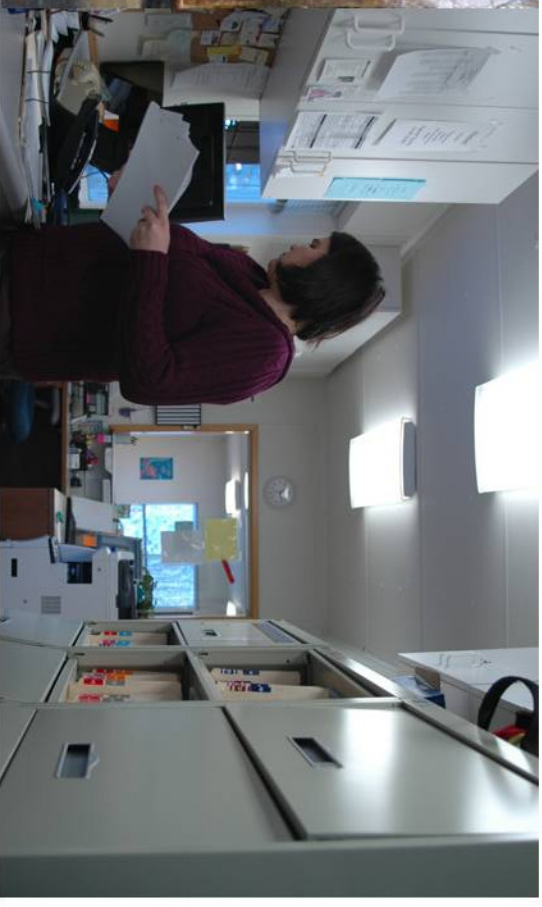
Sincerely,
Agnes Castle



CONCEPTUAL DESIGN WILLOW CLINIC



Current Willow Clinic



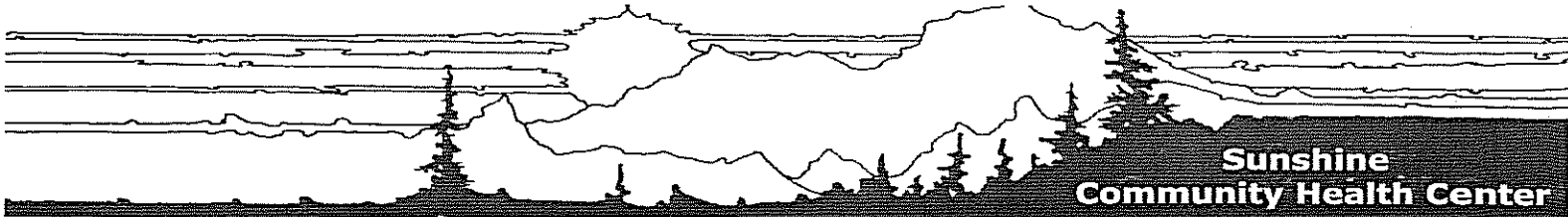
Front Desk/ medical records area



Dispensary/ stall lunch room



Lab and nurses area



**Sunshine
Community Health Center**

☐ SUNSHINE CLINIC HC 89 Box 8190 Mile 4.4 Talkeetna Spur Road, Talkeetna, AK 99676 Ph: (907) 733-2273 Fax: (907) 733-1735
Delivery Address: 34300 South Talkeetna Spur Road
☐ WILLOW CLINIC P.O. Box 1049 - Mile 67 Park Hwy - Willow, AK 99688 Ph: (907) 495-4100 Fax: (907) 495-4106
Delivery Address: 11203 N. Nancy Lakes Parkway

January 26, 2010

Senator Charles Huggins
Senate District H
Room 119, Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator Huggins,

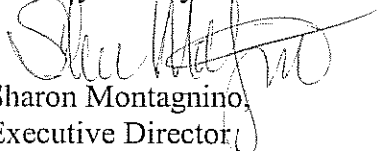
Sunshine Community Health Center, Inc. (SCHC) is requesting funding from the Legislature in 2010 to support the construction of a 7000 sq ft, \$2.8 million dollar medical clinic in Willow. This facility will be constructed on 14 acres of land purchased by SCHC in 2008 and will provide added medical, behavioral health and dental services to Willow and surrounding area. The Willow Clinic, which is a satellite of Sunshine Community Health Center serves children thru seniors, insured and uninsured, and operates on a sliding fee scale, so everyone receives medical services regardless of an inability to pay for such services. In 2009, the Willow Clinic provided 2489 patient visits, which is an average of 10 patients per day. With a larger facility and more exam rooms, we could handle an additional 1235 visits or 5 more patients per day. Currently we turn away 2-3 patients' requests per day for a lab service or medical/behavioral health visit. In the course of one year that amounts to 494 patients who are not being seen or cannot make an appointment with their preferred provider.

This project has received support from the Mat Su Health Foundation in the form of a \$500,000 grant for construction, the donation from the Penn Jersey Drilling Company (offering us a 75% savings) and letters of support from Mat Su Public Health, Willow Lion's Club, individual families, and local businesses. While we have made applications for funds to the Rasmuson Foundation, the Denali Commission, USDA, and the Murdock Foundation and so far committed \$160,000 of our funds, we are still in need of construction funds.

I have attached some supporting documents for your perusal.

Please consider supporting this clinic. Individual and families in your district stand to gain by having a new state-of-the-art medical facility providing lab services, x-rays services, enhanced medical services, behavioral health and a full physician dispensary.

Thank you for your continued time and support.


Sharon Montagnino
Executive Director
Sunshine Community Health Center